



## **Public Health Event Planning Guide**

**Developed By:**  
**Public Health Improvement Partnership**  
**Communications Committee**  
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## Introduction

Events can be great opportunities to raise awareness for an issue. They can also be costly and time consuming, especially if they are not well-planned ahead of time. This kit has been put together to equip your organization with a planning guide to help efficiently manage a strategic event to raise awareness of the Public Health brand in your community. It is designed to supply easy planning strategies and tips, as well as sample materials, to help make your next public health awareness event a success.

An event that is well-planned with clear objectives and messages has a better chance of staying on budget and will help your organization:

- Communicate with its target audiences
- Raise awareness for an issue
- Promote message retention
- Affect attitude and behaviors

This kit provides everything you need to plan a successful event for Public Health Week, including:

- Planning tips
- Media relations tips
- Event ideas
- Public health key messages
- Planning checklists
- Sample sponsor pitch letter
- Sample media relations kit
- Storytelling tips for showing public health's impact

Now all you need to do is to put these suggestions into practice! Good luck!

## **Why Promote Public Health Week?**

Public Health Week 2005, April 4-10, has been chosen by the Public Health Improvement Partnership Communications Committee as a key rallying point for public health agencies across Washington State. Already a visible national observance week, Public Health Week is an existing platform that agencies around the state can use to educate key audiences about the important work of public health. By coming together and hosting events, or distributing information in communities all around the state, the public health community can generate a collective voice that will elevate the level of attention garnered from media and other key audiences.

Tying to a national event such as National Public Health Week provides a natural tie for media to cover your event, increasing your opportunity to spread the PHIP branding in your community. One of the findings that emerged in the research about public health is that many community members don't know what public health is, and even more discouraging, many attribute key activities of public health to other agencies. Creating an event that is appealing to the media provides you an opportune way to share all that public health does to keep your community healthy and safe every day.

Additionally, momentum is built when many public health agencies across Washington participate in Public Health Week. By saying that your organization is one of over 30 counties across the state participating in Public Health Week, it not only increases the credibility of your event, but of every event across the state.

In order to give local public health agencies many choices in how to participate in this statewide event, this document outlines several approaches that can be used to promote the event in your community.

## How to Plan a Community Walk for Public Health Week

In celebration of National Public Health Week this year, we are promoting the idea of a community walk. Community walks are a great way to promote public health in your community and draw attention to the many different parts of your organization.

This year, the American Public Health Association's theme for National Public Health Week is "Empowering Americans to Live Stronger, Longer!" Visit <http://www.apha.org/nphw/05-letter.htm> for more information on what the American Public Health Association has planned to celebrate Public Health Week on a national level. A community walk can easily tie into this theme, and can also highlight your organization's particular areas of focus and promote the three legs of the PHIP identity platform of:

- *Essential programs for improving health*
- *Information that works*
- *Protecting you and your family every day*

Your walk can be large or small, can be for awareness raising about public health, or a fundraiser for a specific project. Most importantly, remember that no matter how big your event is, the goal is to promote the Public Health brand, and to talk about all the good things your organization is doing for the community. No matter the size or the scope, your event is helping raise awareness about public health in your community!

There are many tools, including an event checklist, media release examples and sample letters in Appendix A of this event guide that will help in planning a walk in your community as well as many additional tools on the PHIP website at <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/> including templates for tee-shirts, banners, hats and other items if the scope of your event includes these items. In addition, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- If you plan your walk on a weekday, noon is a great time to have it. Many people walk on their lunch break, and you can work with local businesses to promote the walk to their employees.
  - Also remember to invite the public health workforce, community partners, elected officials, members of the general public, etc. The more people you inform about your walk, the more successful it will be.

- Depending on the scope of your walk, a registration table may or may not be needed. Think about how formal you would like your walk to be. If you want to have giveaway items for the walk (tee-shirt, etc.) a registration table is a good idea; if you are just promoting an informal walk in the community, registration might not be necessary.
  - Remember, templates for tee-shirts, banners, hats and other items are available on the PHIP website at <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/> for you to use.
- Think about the weather in your area when planning the walk. If your community is prone to poor weather in early April, have an alternate location for the walk. Local malls, schools and other large community buildings might be willing to house your walk. All you have to do is ask!
- Having speakers at your walk is an easy and cost effective way to increase the visibility of your walk. Having one or two VIP speakers at the beginning and/or end of your event provides a great reason for the media to come to your event, as well as creating a schedule that helps frame your event. The Mayor is a logical person to ask, as are members of your City Council, members of the Board of Health, administration from your organization, school officials and members of your police and fire departments' administration. In addition to speaking opportunities for VIPs, remember to invite them to participate in the walk as well.

## Other Types of Events

There are many different ways that you can celebrate National Public Health Week in your community if a walk is not feasible for you this year. Below are some ideas that you can use, or feel free to come up with an event that best fits your organization. As you can see, some events are larger than others, and some activities are informational in nature and are not “events” at all. What is important is that your organization does something to promote the important work of public health in your community during National Public Health Week. Feel free to use the following suggestions individually, in some sort of combination, or think of an event that is completely unique to your organization. The tips throughout this guide will help you plan an event, no matter the size or scope.

### Open House

Bringing people to your facilities allows them to experience the work of public health first hand. This event is especially useful if you have recently moved, remodeled, or restructured in any way. The key here is finding an appealing way to get people to your location so you can educate them on all you do for the community. Consider having key members of staff on hand to answer questions, or help people understand the different services you provide. Be sure to highlight the services that occur beyond the doors of your organization. If you decide to plan an open house, it is important to remember to put your best foot forward. This means making sure your offices are clean and uncluttered, with a professional look that is still friendly.

### Spring Cleanup

National Public Health Week takes place the week of April 4-10, 2005. By this time, winter weather in most parts of the state is usually past, creating a time of renewal. Use this opportunity to educate the community about your environmental health efforts through a community cleanup. This does not mean that your organization has to be the only group to participate. People like to help. Alert the media of your planned cleanup, as well as service and youth organizations, making sure that people know that the cleanup is sponsored by your organization.

A community cleanup also provides great teachable moments. By having members of your staff spread throughout the cleanup teams, they will be able to

interact with people from all over the community and share the importance of public health with them in a friendly, conversational way.

### **Research or Report Data Release**

Many public health agencies across the state create assessment reports for their communities. If your organization already produces an annual assessment report, and the information is available in time, consider releasing the results during Public Health Week, or consider launching a new research project during Public Health Week. This is an easy way to take something you already do, and tie it to Public Health Week.

If your organization does not do an assessment report, there are other ways you can release data about the importance of public health to your community. Release a “by the numbers” report that lists the number of restaurant inspections, sewer inspections, immunizations, education events, etc. your organization provided for the community over the last year. This type of report can be very useful in showing the positive impact public health has on your community and demonstrating how public health serves all residents on a daily basis.

### **Workshops/Demonstrations**

There are many different types of workshops you can use as an event for Public Health Week, and like assessment reports, you can often use workshops you already provide as a Public Health Week event. Useful for emergency preparedness, food handling and many other topics, workshops are a great way to interact with members of your community in a positive way. Partner with other organizations and businesses in your community to create a workshop on emergency preparedness where participants can make a basic emergency kit. Use the fact that Public Health Week takes place in April, often associated with spring and better weather, to have a workshop on food handling and BBQ safety. The opportunities are endless.

### **Existing Program Activities**

Many local public health agencies already host various events as a part of their programs’ ongoing work. One approach for Public Health Week is to survey programs for any existing activities that are in the planning stage for spring and consider tying one or more of these activities to Public Health Week. This strategy could be a win-win, drawing more attention to an existing event and helping a local public health agency accomplish two goals with one event.



### **Information Release**

One of the important community services local public health agencies already do is that of releasing information, resources and tips about a variety of topics ranging from hand washing tips to smoke-free restaurant guides and from water quality information to recommended immunization schedules. Consider one or a series of news releases during public health week that focus on timely topics that existing programs are already promoting. Use the Public Health Week theme to underscore the range of services public health agencies provide to their communities.

## Event Planning Tips

**Create an advisory committee:** Rounding up leaders in your community who understand your organization's goals will not only help spread the word about the event, but will also provide a good sounding board for ideas. Leaders can also give input on the needs and resources in your community, as well as give a new perspective.

Choose individuals who can provide credibility, expertise, endorsement, or contacts and who will be committed to help. Representatives of your audience can also be good advisory committee members. The committee can meet as often as you need. With today's technology, there are more options available to make coordinating busy schedules easier. Conference calls and email can be extremely effective tools for receiving feedback. We suggest at least one face-to-face meeting as a group, so that people can network and get to know each other.

**Develop partnerships in the community:** A community working together will have more impact in spreading the Public Health brand. Be sure to choose partners that have the same goals as your organization and are committed to the public health issues. Think outside the box when you are brainstorming potential partners. Of course there will be obvious partners like schools, clinics and hospitals, but consider non-traditional partners like fire departments, churches and retail chains that cater to families/children or general good health.

**Link the event day to a national or state recognition day:** These relationships give your organization greater leverage with the media and members of your community. Public Health Week is a great time to plan an event that will spread the Public Health brand and heighten awareness of your organization in the community. Many different organizations across Washington State working together to promote public health in their communities during Public Health Week increases media interest in all events, and strengthens everyone's efforts.

Public Health Week is not the only time you can create an event to spread the Public Health brand. You can create events that tie to other national events, or create events that are not connected to any sort of national event, but have timeliness for your community. For example, a back-to-school immunization drive will have greater impact if you can also say that it is in support of National Immunization Month in August; but a community-wide West Nile Virus

cleanup, or an educational event on food handling at the start of BBQ season, can be just as effective.

**Location! Location! Location!** Choose venues that already have high traffic from members of the target audience you are trying to reach and tie to the theme of your event. Think schools or playgrounds for promoting immunizations; grocery store or farmers market if your event is promoting healthy eating. That way you will already have a captive audience. Be sure the location is easy to access, has adequate parking and restrooms, and space to set up an exhibit or accommodate your event's activities.

**Develop goals and objectives:** It is easy to get caught up with the details and planning of an event and forget why you are doing it. One of your first tasks should be writing goals and objectives. Think about why you are doing the event and what you want to accomplish by hosting it. Make sure your objectives are realistic. Consider the budget and time that will go into planning and implementing an event. Is it the right activity to reach your audiences and accomplish organizational goals?

**Sample:**

- **Goal:** Increase awareness on how public health is protecting the community's drinking water.
- **Objective:** Have 100 people come to water quality workshop at the health department.
- **Objective:** Have 2 media outlets cover the event.

**Conduct best practice research:** This is a step that is often skipped, but spending a couple hours on the Internet or calling another organization to ask about what they learned from planning their event will help you get ideas and activities, potential partners and determine what has been the most successful in other communities. There is a vast network involved in promoting the Public Health brand in Washington that you can talk to about past events they have done and get ideas on how to best execute your event. Call any member of the PHIP Communications Committee and they can point you to resources and other organizations to talk to. A list of the PHIP Communications Committee members and their contact information is available in Appendix A of this packet.

**Involve the media:** Public health issues are community issues. The media should be aware of your organization's activities to keep the community healthy. That

doesn't mean that the media will always cover your event. Nor does it suggest that an event should be planned only to attract media attention. It is the job of local media to inform the general public on issues and events that affect them, so your event needs to be for the community in order to be credible and draw positive media attention. See tips on working with the media in this packet.

**Make sure your display and materials are inviting:** In order to make an impact your event needs to be visually stimulating. It is human nature to be attracted to what captures our attention. A well-organized display with inviting materials will attract audience members, opening a line of communication with them. Have a plan once audience members have approached the booth. What do you want them to do? Get information? Ask questions? It pays to be prepared. There are many different types of tools on the PHIP website that you can customize and use with your event including brochures, give-aways, photos, PowerPoint templates, etc. Go to <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/> for more information on available tools.

**Evaluate the event:** Determining the event's success will help decide whether to do more events in the future and track the results of your efforts. Think about measuring your event's success ahead of time. Assign someone to count attendance or ask participants for feedback. See evaluation tips in this packet.

## Evaluation Tips

Your event is done. You breathe a sigh of relief and ask yourself, “How did it go?” It is beneficial to reexamine your goals and objectives and find ways to measure your event. In doing so, you will be able to:

- Report your success to others in your organization
- Decide if it is worth repeating
- Determine whether the goals and objectives were accomplished
- Make changes when planning future events

In events such as workshops, it is common for trainers to hand out a questionnaire for participants to complete. Providing a survey for attendees to fill out is a good evaluation tool, but there are other ways to evaluate all types of events:

- Revisit your goals and objectives. Ask, “Were these accomplished?”
- Have someone count the people who attended the event. Look for characteristics that would indicate those attending were part of the target audience.
- Track all media clippings.
- Develop one or two key questions, based on your goals and objectives, to randomly ask attendees during the event.
- If you have the names of attendees, interview them later by telephone or send them a survey.
- Note the amount of materials that were passed out or vaccines given.
- Take photographs of the event and displays.
- Record the number of follow-up calls your organization receives as a result of the event.
- Ask your partners and sponsors for feedback.
- Share your results with the Department of Health.

## Public Health Key Messages

Key messages are the main points you want to convey to your various audiences. Audiences can better process the information if it is repeated frequently and the information is concise and brief. Research shows that target audiences must hear a message at least three to four times before they will take action.

The purpose of having an event is to promote the Public Health Identity Platform, **“always working for a safer and healthier Washington,”** and educate the public about the value of public health and, in turn, your agency to the community. The three key themes that support the identity platform are:

1. **Essential programs for improving health**
2. **Information that works**
3. **Protecting you and your family every day**

Your key messages should be consistent with not only the event’s goals and objectives, but also promote the public health branding and be presented to the target audience in a manner that will appeal to them. All materials should contain the same key messages, although that does not necessarily mean saying the exact same thing every time. It is acceptable to use different language to make the same point.

Different audiences respond to different messages. The chart on the following page shows the various target audiences and what information and themes are important to them (based on the research). This chart will help you develop messages that will most effectively support the overarching theme of how public health agencies are **“always working for a safer and healthier Washington.”**

Additional information on public health key messages and how to best use them is available on the PHIP website, <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/>.

| Identity Messages by Target Audience<br>At-A-Glance   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| TARGET AUDIENCES  | IDENTITY SUB-THEMES AND MESSAGES BY TARGET AUDIENCE<br>(Shaded cells are priority messages for that specific audience) |  |  |
|   | Essential programs<br>for improving health<br>(Improving Health)   | Information that works<br>(Information)  | Protecting you and your<br>family every day<br>(Safety/Security)   |
| <b>General Public</b><br>(Key Idea – you are<br>safer and healthier)  | Making your<br>community a healthy<br>place to live, work<br>and play  | Trusted information for<br>healthy communities<br>and healthy choices  | Public health programs,<br>working to protect you and<br>your family every day                             |
| <b>Business community</b><br>(Key Idea –<br>investments that<br>work and local<br>community)                | Public health<br>agencies –an<br>investment that<br>works for better<br>health solutions                               | Public health agencies –<br>objective information<br>for making healthy<br>choices at home, work<br>and play     | Public health programs –<br>investments that protect<br>your community’s health<br>and safety every day    |
| <b>Policy makers –<br/>Elected Officials</b><br>(Key Idea - essential<br>for their local<br>constituencies) | State and local public<br>health departments –<br>an essential network<br>for a safer and<br>healthier Washington      | State and local public<br>health departments –<br>science-based<br>information for essential<br>health decisions | Public health programs –<br>essential investments for<br>helping communities meet<br>their health needs    |
| <b>Media</b><br>(Key Idea – reliable<br>resources)  | State and local public<br>health departments –<br>science-based<br>programs from<br>experts who know<br>your community | State and local public<br>health departments –<br>reliable resources for<br>essential health<br>information      | A statewide network of<br>health professionals<br>working every day for safer<br>and healthier communities |
| <b>Partners</b><br>(Key Idea – essential<br>resources and<br>networks)                                      | A network of<br>programs and people<br>essential for<br>improving health   | Reliable information for<br>better health programs   | Public health professionals<br>working together every day<br>for community health                          |
| <b>PH workforce</b><br>(Key Idea – essential<br>and effective people<br>and programs)                       | Making Washington<br>a healthier place to<br>live, work and play   | A reliable source for<br>statewide health and<br>safety information  | Public health programs and<br>professionals – protecting<br>you and your family every<br>day               |

*Tip: Key messages should be used consistently throughout the event in all materials, talking points, displays, invitations and news releases.*

### **Tips for Recruiting Sponsors/Partners**

While working with sponsors and partners is not always important, recruiting sponsors and partners in the community is a good way to create a larger event while keeping the work load manageable for you and your staff. Consider partners that you naturally work with already, such as hospitals, schools, police and firefighters as well as groups you don't already work with but have a history of community involvement, such as stores, restaurants and places of worship. Below are tips to use when recruiting sponsors/partners for your event:

- Make the initial contact through personal acquaintances, if possible
- Match your needs with the organizations that can benefit from your efforts
- Prepare written information that describes your event, what you expect to accomplish and the benefits derived from their participation
- Write, call and meet with the potential sponsor(s)
- Give several options for involvement
- Choose specific, short-term activities that are likely to be successful
- Ask for a definite commitment to one or several tasks
- Be prepared to give something in return
- Clarify responsibilities on both sides
- Schedule and identify persons for follow-up contacts
- Encourage new relationships and seek new opportunities to work together
- Say thank you verbally and write a note



## Media Tips

The media—i.e., television, radio, newspapers and other publications—is a trusted source for information and influences public opinion. News coverage of your public health event can help create greater awareness in your community about not only the event, but about all the good work public health is doing in your community and across Washington, and can help you educate your audiences about the value of public health.

Because no one can control media coverage, it is helpful to design an event that does not rely solely on media attention. Using the strategies in this guide will help you maximize your chances of garnering good media attention. However, other direct communication tactics should also be planned to prevent over-reliance on media coverage, since breaking news is unpredictable. Here are some tips to help your organization put its best foot forward in attracting media attention for a public health event.

### **Make a media list.**

When you know the names, telephone and fax numbers, email and special interests of individual journalists, you can send materials and news releases directly to those most likely to use them. Newsrooms receive hundreds of news releases per day. Getting your news release to the correct person is half the battle.

- Call local television, radio and print media to get the name and contact information for whoever covers the health beat.
- Do a web search on local media's Web sites.
- Scan newspapers and monitor radio and television shows to learn the names of reporters who cover health and safety topics.
- Check media directories, which are available online, at libraries, or through organizations such as the Public Relations Society of America.
- Consider collaborating with partner organizations that already have an updated media list.
- Add information about deadlines, special interests and informational needs when you are researching your list.
- Update the list every few months. The media work in a very fast-paced environment. Reporters change jobs frequently.

### **Write a news release.**

A news release is a written document that gives an overview of your event to a reporter, editor or producer. The news release should:

- Be timely, newsworthy, well-written and edited
- Answer: Who? What? Why? When? Where?
- Be short and concise (2 pages maximum)
- Follow Associated Press Style
- Include a contact person, phone number and email address that is up-to-date and accurate
- Promote your event's visual appeal. Whether it is a TV camera or a print photograph, news is visual. Include information about photo opportunities at the end of the release.
- Include one or two quotes from influential people in the community to help draw attention to your event. Be sure to get their permission before sending the news release to the media.

Send the news release five to seven days before the event (it can be faxed or emailed). Remember to send your release to all the different types of media outlets in your area, including television, radio, print, alternative media and internet media sources. See a sample news release in Appendix A.

A media advisory – a one-page synopsis of the news release that gives only the who, what, when and where – may be sent a month prior to the event to community calendars and again two to three days prior as a reminder.

Community calendars are often listed through a variety of sources, including television, radio and print media, the Chamber of Commerce, local community centers and local colleges and universities. See a sample media advisory in the Appendix A.

### **Make follow-up calls.**

News releases should always be followed by a phone call. A follow-up call is your opportunity to tell a reporter about your event. It helps remind reporters of your event and also ensures that your news release was received.

- Call reporters between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. This is after their morning staff meeting and before afternoon deadlines.
- When you call, say to a reporter, "I want to tell you about a significant event to help our community stay healthy." Then ask, "Is now a good time?" If not, find out when you can call them back. Remember, the media operates off deadlines.

- Think about what you will say before you call. You probably have about 60 seconds to convey that this is a newsworthy event and important public health information.
- Consider your event from a reporter's perspective. Ask yourself what is happening at the event that the public should know about? What health information is the public uninformed or misinformed about that this event will address?
- Act as a resource for reporters. Offer to set-up an interview. Always ask interviewees ahead of time for their permission to give their names to a reporter and make sure they are willing and able to communicate correct information about public health. Written information such as fact sheets and statistics can also be helpful to a reporter.
- Be prepared to answer a reporter's questions. If you don't know the answer, tell them that you don't know but will find out and get back to them in a timely manner. Never say, "no comment" or say something is "off the record."

**Prepare for the media to attend your event.**

Once you've invited the media via a news release, you should be prepared for them to attend the event. Think about what you want to communicate to the media ahead of time. Consider what the most important messages are for your key audience to hear. Keep your points positive and include a phone number where they can call for more information. If the media attends your event:

- Continue with the event as if they were not there. The media wants to capture the event as it happens. The media should not disrupt the event in any way.
- Designate a person to greet the members of the media and show them where they can set up any equipment.
- Provide written information about the event (news release, event schedule, fact sheets, and/or brochures about your program).
- Suggest people they can interview. Be sure to ask potential interviewees for their permission to be interviewed ahead of time.
- Answer the reporter's questions using your key messages. If you don't know an answer, say so and offer to find out the answer before their deadline. Never say "no comment" or say something is "off the record."
- Look at the reporter, not the camera, and dress appropriately.

**Evaluate the results.**

Keeping a record of the number of media personnel who attend your event and what they cover will have many positive outcomes. Media clippings can be used in the future when you apply for grants or report to others in your organization. It will also help to develop relationships with reporters for future newsworthy events or programs.

- Track news stories. Clip media coverage and keep in a file or binder. Include the date of coverage, reporter and media outlet with the clipping. For a fee, video and print clipping services can track media coverage for you. Check your local yellow pages or call the media outlet to find a clipping service.
- Continue to build relationships with reporters in your area— send them newsworthy health information or reports, let them know that you are available for interviews on related health stories, or simply write them a thank you note for helping to inform the public of valuable health information.

## Appendix A: Event Tools Samples

## Media Advisory (sample)

For More Information:

Jane Smith, Communication Coordinator

Snohomish Health District

(425) 555-5555

jane.smith@snohomishhealth.org

### **COMMUNITY WALK CELEBRATES NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK**

**WHAT:** Snohomish Health District kicks off Snohomish County's celebration of National Public Health Week on April 4<sup>th</sup> with a community walk commencing at 4 p.m. at the Health District's office, 555 Main Street. Open to all members of the community, the walk will celebrate the health of Snohomish County residents, focusing on ways that every member of our community can work to live stronger and longer. Sponsoring this walk is just one of the ways that the Snohomish Health District is working to make our community safer and healthier every day. Representatives from all offices of the Health District as well as community leaders will give brief remarks before joining in the walk.

**WHO:** All members of the community

**WHERE:** Snohomish Health District, 555 Main Street, Snohomish, WA

**WHEN:** April 4, 2005 4 p.m.

**WHY:** The health and safety of every resident of Snohomish County is of the utmost importance to the Health District, and we would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the health of the community with a community walk.

### **PHOTO/VIDEO**

**OPPORTUNITY:** If you would like to photograph the walk, Snohomish Health District will welcome news photographers and videographers at 4 p.m. on April 4, 2005 at the Snohomish Health District, 555 Main Street, Snohomish, WA and to follow the walk through town.

*Public Health, always working for a safer and healthier Snohomish County.*

## Media Advisory (template)

For More Information:

[Contact Name, Title]

[Contact Phone Number]

[Contact Email]

### **(Headline)**

WHAT: [name of event] kicks off [city, county, state] celebration of [name of national event]. [Description of the event].

WHO: [key presenters, sponsors, and spokespersons and their affiliation]

WHERE: [location, and address]

WHEN: [date and time]

WHY: [statistic that shows the need. See key messages]

### **PHOTO/VIDEO**

OPPORTUNITY: If you would like to photograph [name event], [name of event sponsor] will welcome news photographers and videographers from [time] on [date of event] at [location of event]. OR [describe other photo opportunities at your event and list times and location]

*Public Health, always working for a safer and healthier Washington.*

**News Release (sample)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

John Doe, Health Information Officer  
Spokane County Health District  
(509) 555-1212  
[john.doe@srhd.org](mailto:john.doe@srhd.org)

**Spokane Regional Health District Celebrates National Public Health Week  
with Community Walk**

(March 21, 2005 – Spokane, WA) – A community walk kicks off Spokane’s celebration of National Public Health Week. Over 20 counties statewide are expected to participate in celebrating National Public Health Week this year, April 4-10, 2005, many with communities participating in walks similar to the one in Spokane.

Spokane Regional Health District is sponsoring a community walk on the Centennial Trail on Saturday, April 9, 2005. All members of the community are invited to join Health District employees in a walk along one of our community’s most treasured landmarks, the Spokane River. Interested participants are invited to meet at the Riverfront Park Carousel, at 2 p.m. for the community walk.

“We are committed to the health of every resident of Spokane County and this walk is just one way that the Spokane Regional Health District is working for a safe and health community every day. Walking is a great way to keep healthy and combined with healthy eating can help prevent obesity in our community,” said Health Officer Dr. Kim Thorburn. “Public health affects every member of our community, and this event highlights the power of working together to promote better community health.”

For more information on the walk, or to register, contact John Doe at (509) 555-1212 or [john.doe@srhd.org](mailto:john.doe@srhd.org).

*Public Health, always working for a safer and healthier Washington.*



## News Release (template)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Contact Name, Title]

[Contact Phone]

[Contact Email]

### **[Headline]**

(Date – City, State) – [Name of event] kicks off [city county state] celebration of National Public Health Week. Over [number] communities statewide are expected to participate in this year's observance scheduled for April 4-10, 2005.

[Give information about the local event and how it ties into Public Health Week. If there are several local events, provide a website link that can offer all the specific information.]

[Quote about importance of public health in the community]

*Public Health, always working for a safer and healthier Washington.*

Certificate of Completion (template)

# Certificate of Participation

Awarded to \_\_\_\_\_ for the completion of \_\_\_\_\_  
on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Presented by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

Registration Form (template)

Community Walk Event Registration

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | CONTACT INFORMATION<br>Phone or Email |
|------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
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Event Program Agenda (sample)

**Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department  
1<sup>ST</sup> Annual Public Health Walk**

**Heritage Park at Capitol Lake  
Wednesday, April 6, 2005  
11:30 to 1:30**

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|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>11:30 am</b> | <b>Registration begins</b>  |
| <b>11:50 am</b> | <b>Welcome...Diana T. Yu, Thurston County Health Officer<br/>Special Guests...<br/>Mary Selecky, Secretary of Health<br/>Maxine Hayes MD, MPH, State Health Officer</b> |
| <b>12:10 pm</b> | <b>WALK!!!!<br/>One lap around Capitol Lake = approximately 3400 STEPS<br/>Three laps = approximately 10,000 STEPS...GO FOR IT!!!</b>                                   |
| <b>1:30 pm</b>  | <b>Closing...Participant Certificates available at registration.</b>  |

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## **Proclamation Information**

Having the mayor or other county official sign a proclamation gives an event credibility and is an event that you can publicize. It is a simple process that shows public documentation supporting your public health event. You will probably need to submit your request at least one month prior to the event. For National Public Health Week 2005, the PHIP Communications Committee, DOH and the Health Care Authority have submitted a proclamation request to the governor's office.

### **How to submit proclamation requests to the offices of the mayor and county commissioners:**

Check with your local government offices about submitting local government proclamations. The requirements will vary from community to community. They will probably require a written request and sample proclamation. They may require lead-time, so check with them at least a month or two prior to the event for requirements.

## Sponsor Pitch Letter (Sample)

Dear Mr. Jones:

Public health is working for a safer and healthier community each and every day. With essential programs for making our community a healthy place to live, work and play; trusted information for healthy communities and healthy choices and programs that work to protect your community's health and safety every day, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department is working for you.

TPCHD is planning a community walk to raise awareness about public health in our community. We would like to invite Alice's Market to join us in improving the health of Washington State by sponsoring this walk.

As you know, healthy living is an essential part to a healthy community. On Saturday, April 9, TPCHD will sponsor a community walk to raise awareness about the important role physical activity plays in a healthy lifestyle. As part of the walk, we would like to provide tee-shirts to all participants who complete the walk. We would like to ask Alice's Market to join in our efforts by sponsoring all or part of the cost for these tee-shirts.

We understand that you are committed to improving our community's health and safety. Participating in this event will be a highly visible way for Alice's Market to support the community with a service that is directly related to your type of business. In exchange for your donation, TPCHD will highlight Alice's Market as a key sponsor in all our printed promotional materials for the walk.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated. We will call you in the next week to answer any questions you may have and set up a time to meet to further discuss your participation.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  
Jane.doe@tpchd.org

### Sponsor Pitch Letter (template)

Dear [Name]:

Public health is working for a safer and healthier community each and every day. With essential programs for making our community a healthy place to live, work and play; trusted information for healthy communities and healthy choices and programs that work to protect your community's health and safety every day, [organization name] is working for you.

On [Date] [organization name] is planning an [type of event] event to raise awareness about public health in our community. We would like to invite [name of sponsor organization] to join us in improving the health of Washington State by sponsoring [name of event].

[Description of event. Be specific. Include theme, goals, date, number of participants]

[Describe what you want from sponsor. Be specific. Give options].

We understand that you are committed to improving our community's health and safety. Participating in this event will [Insert ways it will benefit sponsor, be specific and use statistics].

Your consideration is greatly appreciated. We will call you in the next week to answer any questions you may have and set up a time to meet to further discuss your participation.

Sincerely,

[name, title]

[organization]

[contact information]

## Event Checklist (sample)

Below are general checklists you can use in planning your event. These checklists contain items that would be needed for most events and can be customized to meet the needs of your specific event.

### Establish an event advisory/planning committee

- ☐ Recruit advisory committee
- ☐ Host advisory committee meeting (location, date, time)
- ☐ Invite advisory committee members (members could be some of the local partners)

### Roles of the advisory/planning committee

- ☐ Plan and implement a local event that ties in with statewide event
- ☐ Ongoing coordination and communication with parent organization
- ☐ Find a location
- ☐ Recruit local sponsorship/partnerships
- ☐ Develop local invitation list (include local government officials, legislators, community leaders, health officials, athletes or celebrities and others)
- ☐ Recruit volunteers
- ☐ Ask children to participate and make sure they have transportation to and from the event
- ☐ Determine entertainment and develop event program
- ☐ Decide on recognition awards, if applicable
- ☐ Invite VIPs
- ☐ Invite speakers and other participants
- ☐ Design, print and mail invitations
- ☐ Track RSVPs
- ☐ Secure transportation and hotel (if needed)
- ☐ Design and print programs, banners, name tags, posters, directional signs, speaker table tents and podium signage
- ☐ Recruit emcee
- ☐ Write script/talking points for emcee
- ☐ Write speaker remarks/talking points, where appropriate
- ☐ Secure a proclamation from the Mayor's office
- ☐ Plan and coordinate entertainment and event program
- ☐ Rent any special equipment that will be needed for the event (podium, microphones, TV, VCR, LCD panel computer and screen, easel, etc.)



- ☐ Promote the event on a local level
- ☐ Make sure all displays and materials are ready
- ☐ Develop a local media list
- ☐ Send media advisory one month prior and again two to three days before
- ☐ Send news release seven to five days prior
- ☐ Make follow-up media calls one to two days before the event
- ☐ Arrange any media interviews
- ☐ Purchase any necessary food and beverages
- ☐ Take photographs on the day of the event
- ☐ Program evaluation
- ☐ Send thank you notes

## Storytelling

Storytelling can be an effective way to put a “face” on public health, making public health activities, and in turn your organization, tangible to the community. Storytelling is using personal stories of those people positively affected by public health to talk about what you do as an organization.

### **How to collect stories**

Sometimes people will send letters to your organization, or call your main phone line to share a positive experience they have had. You will want to make sure to keep track of these stories, and check with the person to see if you can use their story to promote public health. Some people will be more than happy to let you use their story, while others might be somewhat unsure. Offer to use the story anonymously for those who it would be sensitive to share (for example: a restaurant that got a bad inspection, but you worked with them to correct the problem might be willing to share their story, but not identifying information about themselves to protect their business). For additional stories, talk with various members of your organization who work with members of the public on a regular basis for potential testimonial ideas, and then work with them to obtain the story.

### **How to use stories**

Once storytelling testimonials have been obtained, they can be used in a variety of ways. Below are a few suggestions of how to use storytelling for your organization, but the possibilities for story uses is endless:

- As examples in brochures, fact sheets, etc.
- In press releases to emphasize the topic.
- Public service announcements (PSA) and advertising
- When talking to public officials about the importance of public health

## PHIP Communication Committee Roster

**Maryann Welch, Co-Chair**

Grays Harbor County Public Health and  
Social Services Department

**Heidi Keller, Co-Chair**

Washington State Department of Health  
Office of Health Promotion

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**James Apa**

Public Health – Seattle and King County

**Sandra Owen**

Benton-Franklin Health District

**Laura Blaske**

Washington State Department of Health  
Communications Office/Web and  
Publications

**Suzanne Pate**

Snohomish Health District

**Joan Brewster**

Washington State Department of Health  
Office of Public Health Systems  
Development and Planning

**Joanne Prado**

Washington State Department of Health  
Office of Environmental Health  
Assessments

**Peter Browning**

Skagit County Department of Health

**Art Starry**

Thurston County Public Health and  
Social Services Department

**Elaine Engle**

Spokane Regional Health District

**Holly Weese**

University of Washington  
School of Public Health and Community  
Medicine

**Marie Flake**

Washington State Department of Health  
Office of Public Health Systems  
Development and Planning

**Judith Yarrow**

University of Washington  
Health Policy Analysis Program

**Vicki Kirkpatrick**

Washington State Association of Local  
Public Health Officials

**Consultants:**

Desautel Hege Communications

**Craig McLaughlin**

Washington State Board of Health

## Appendix B: Additional Event Suggestions

## **Additional Event Suggestions**

### **Community Cleanup for Environmental Health**

Environmental health is an area of public health that is people can become visibly aware of. Creating a community cleanup day once or twice a year is a great platform to talk about all the parts of the community's health that are protected by public health, including sewer inspections, water inspections, air quality, etc.

#### Event suggestions:

- Partner with local service groups for a highway cleanup.
- Partner with local schools for park cleanup.
- Partner with local Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts for a river cleanup.
- Work with local media to promote families doing a cleanup of the public places they most often frequent.
- Have several drop-off locations for hazardous materials and promote to families in the spring when many people clean out their garages and basements.

### **BBQ and Food Safety**

Summer is synonymous with picnics and back-yard BBQs in the northwest. What people often don't know is how to properly handle foods for these events, including how cold to keep salads and vegetables and how hot to cook meat and side dishes. The beginning of the summer is a great teachable moment on food handling, and to promote all the good work local health organizations do in keeping the community's food safe.

#### Event suggestions:

- Partner with a local television station to produce a segment that includes tips on backyard BBQ safety.
- Produce a quick-tips sheet on food safety and partner with local grocery stores to produce and/or distribute. Some stores might even be willing to print tips on their grocery bags during the summer months.
- Create a list of all the local restaurants that have passed food inspections with flying colors, and celebrate those establishments publicly.

### **West Nile Cleanup**

West Nile Virus has been in the news increasingly in recent years, and is a topic that the media always has interest in. Because of the recent increase in West Nile Virus in the Northwest, many families are concerned about how to prevent the Virus, but are unsure about the best way to do so. By creating an event to draw

awareness to West Nile, it provides an opportune time to promote public health as well.

Event suggestions:

- Create a list of West Nile cleanup tips that families can use to prevent mosquito growth at home.
- Work with local schools to educate kids about preventing West Nile, with handouts to take home to parents.
- Have a week where people can call their local LHJ and get a free West Nile evaluation of their yard.
- Create a West Nile cleanup at local parks, riverbanks, etc. and work with service groups for manpower and promotion.

**The Flu**

Each fall the flu becomes a major concern. The media is generally looking for possible stories on the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation to vaccinate children ages 6 to 23 months and people in high priority groups is an important reminder each year from October through the first of the next year.

Event suggestions:

- Partner with providers, hospitals, clinics, schools or large businesses.
- Sponsor a flu shot clinic in the fall, just before flu season at your agency or in public places frequented by the target audience – malls, grocery stores, schools, places of work, etc.
- Create handouts on preventing the spread of flu (cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often and stay home and away from others if you are sick) and provide at local grocery stores, child care facilities, places of work, etc.
- Create a special page on your website with information on flu shot clinics (locations, times, etc.), tips on reducing the spread of flu and vaccine supply.

**Back-to-school Immunizations**

During the summer, families start preparing for children to go back to school, which includes health exams and immunizations. It's already on their minds, so take advantage of that opportunity. Review immunization recommendations by age. Describe a typical classroom prior to vaccinations by showing the number of children that would get a disease. Review what immunizations are needed to start school. Use testimonials to communicate immunization messages.

Event suggestions:

- Sponsor a back-to-school immunization clinic for children.
- New clothes and school supplies are also things parents think of when getting their kids ready for school. Partner with a retailer and give children discounts on these items or have drawings for these items as prizes.
- Hold the event at a local shopping mall and tie it in with mall promotions.
- Create a competition between schools for most immunized kids.
- Include student governments in planning the event.
- Host the event at the first big sporting event of the year.
- Have an immunization informational booth at a local mall or other high-traffic area.
- Send a news release with DOH immunization guidelines to the media.